

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 040640 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3119

S E C R E T KABUL 3280

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, AF

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF KING ZAHIR'S PERSONAL VALET AND
AFGHAN EMBASSY/ WASHINGTON IN SMUGGLING OF HASHISH OIL TO U. S.

REF: KABUL 3279

1. REFTEL IS BNDD KABUL MESSAGE CONCERNING REPORTED
INVOLVEMENT OF MOHAMMAD RAHIM PANJSHIRI (" RAHIM GHULAM BACHA")
AND UNIDENTIFIED ACCOMPLICES IN AFGHAN EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, IN PLAN
TO SMUGGLE 40 KILOS HASHISH OIL TO US IN LATE MAY 1973.

2. AS DEPT AWARE, RAHIM PANJSHIRI IS LONG- TIME FAMILY RETAINER
IN PALACE WHO HAS EXTREMELY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO HM KING ZAHIR,
TO WHOM HE SERVES AS PERSONAL VALET. PANJSHIRI LONG NOTORIOUS
HERE AS SMUGGLER OF AMNY ITEMS, SUCH AS LAPIS AND GOLD, AND WIDELY
BELIEVED BY AFGHANS TO HANDLE SUCH TRANSACTIONS FOR ACCOUNT OF
MEMBERS OF ROYAL FAMILY, AS WELL AS FOR HIS OWN PECUNIARY INTERESTS.
THIS IS FIRST SERIOUS REPORT, AS DISTINCT FROM RUMORS, OF HIS
INVOLVEMENT WITH DRUG TRAFFIC.

3. EMBASSY SHARES COMPLETELY BNDD VIEW THAT VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT
EFFORT NECESSARY TO SURVEIL AND EVENTUALLY SEIZE SHIPMENT IN
US, TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION AGAINST ANY AFGHAN EMBASSY
STAFF MEMBERS WHO MAY PROVE TO BE INVOLVED. THIS WILL, WE HOPE,
SEND CLEAR SIGNAL TO RGA AND PALACE OF DANGERS IN NOT
COOPERATING FULLY WITH INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFIC.

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4. AT SAME TIME, ALL ELEMENTS OF USG SHOULD UNDERSTAND DELICACY

OF CASE. PANJSHIRI IS BOUND TO KING BY TIGHT AFGHAN- STYLE BOND OF HONOR AND GRATITUDE FOR SERVICES HE PERFORMED FOR ROYAL FAMILY DURING PERIOD WHEN THRONE ITSELF WAS THREATENED. HE IS CLOSER TO KING THAN ANY OF KING' S SONS, AND IS UNDOUBTEDLY PRIVY TO MANY ROYAL SECRETS. THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT KING IS AWARE OF THIS ASPECT OF PANJSHIRI' S ACTIVITIES OR THAT HE IN ANY WAY INVOLVED. NONETHELESS, ANY DIRECT EFFORT BY FOREIGN OFFICIALS TO MOVE AGAINST HIM IN AFGHANISTAN WOULD, WE BELIEVE, BE VIEWED BY KING AS INTOLERABLE AFFRONT TO DIGNITY OF THRONE. THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY, IN OUR JUDGEMENT, THAT HE WOULD EVER BE PROSECUTED HERE FOR ANY DRUG OFFENSE. WE DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE PANJSHIRI WOULD RISK ACCOMPANYING SHIPMENT (AS HE HAS SOMETIMES DONE IN OTHER TYPES OF SMUGGLING). THEREFORE, WE ASSUME OUR OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO ACT AGAINST SHIPMENT AND ACCOMPLICES IN US IN WAY WHICH WILL SEND CLEAR SIGNAL OF DANGER TO PANJSHIRI AND RGA, BUT WILL AVOID DIRECT CHALLENGE TO KING IN PROCESS.

5. AS DEPT FULLY AWARE, FUTURE OF ALL OUR EFFORTS HERE TO DEVELOP ANTI- NARCOTICS PROGRAM UNDER UN LEADERSHIP IS AT CRUCIAL STAGE. KING' S

CONTINUED SUPPORT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS. ENFORCEMENT ACTION IN THIS CASE MUST, THEREFORE, BE HANDLED IN A WAY WHICH DOES NOT FORCE KING TO CHOOSE OPENLY BETWEEN PANJSHIRI AND FOREIGN POLICE ADVISORY PRESENCE. ROYAL AFGHAN PRIDE COULD MAKE THAT AN UNPLEASANT CHOICE FOR US INTERESTS IN OVERALL NARCOTICS EFFORT HERE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPT PLEASE FURNISH COPY OF THIS MESSAGE TO BNDD, GEORGE BELK ONLY.
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